

## Facilitated Small Group Discussion – Summary

Question 1: What is the biggest challenge you have encountered in being a project coordinator and how did you deal with that challenge?

### Challenges

1. The lack of human resources at the SWCD level.
2. The need to seek sustainable funding.
3. Increased project & field office workloads due to the '08 floods
4. No training for new coordinators
5. Dealing with different personalities
6. Negativity in the watershed, from landowners and media.
7. "Bad blood" in the watershed
8. relating to landowners
9. Changes in 319/WPF/WSPF-contracts, this is very low interest without 75% c/s

### Solutions

1. Build relationships in the SWCD office.
2. Network with non-profits and other local agencies
3. Prioritize duties
4. Utilize all the resources available, contact RCs about resources
5. "Pick your fights" and be adaptable
6. Invite media to the watershed, instead of conducting over-the-phone interviews. Provide a tour of the watershed and have them meet and possible interview a landowner in the watershed.
7. Personal face to face contact. If a particular landowner is angry find out why and try to help.
8. Get to know you landowners and practices available
9. Contact Mike Franklin to see if an amendment can be made to your contract.

Question 2: What is the best tactic you have used to get landowners and local people involved in your watershed project?

### Best Tactics

1. Show the landowner how the practice will benefit his land, and not so much how the practice will benefit the watershed.
2. Capitalize on successful practices installed
3. Peer Pressure – find out who has conservation land ethic and utilize them
4. Be upfront and truthful.
5. Provide and discuss individual conservation plans with landowners.
6. Provide food at public meeting to improve attendance.
7. Look at all your resources and find where landowners "hang-out"
8. Get acquainted with land and people. Socialize with locals by visiting cafes, coffee shops, ect.
9. Send personalized postcards instead of letters
10. Create signage that draws attention to individual landowners.
11. Use proper people skills when interfacing with stakeholders and public
  - o maintain a positive attitude
  - o do not be pushy but persistent
  - o first find out what stakeholders want and need
  - o maintaining a flexible balance when selling BMPs – stakeholder may not be interested in plan a but willing to do plan b.
12. Develop and maintain an advisory board
13. Selling practices early and often

14. Call out-of-state landowners to get them involved
15. Outreach
  - Frequent, informational and new technology forums
  - Happy grams, newsletters, multiple mailings directly to landowners
  - Field days with food, highlight a successful practice a landowner installed

Question 3: What information and education tactics work best in your Project?

1. Conduct public meetings and invite sources outside of DSC, DNR, to speak (FSA, City officials, extension staff). Have a landowner provide comments during public meetings. Involve FFA/4H groups to be involved in project.
2. Some local phone companies will allow fliers to be included with phone bill (Free service).
3. Use existing newsletters (FSA newsletters)
4. Attend County Supervisor Meeting - Invite county supervisor member to join watershed advisory council.
5. Conservation and Religion – Promote watershed project through churches.
6. Food + Meetings
7. Field days highlighting a successful practice and happy landowner

Question 4: What is the most important skill to have as a project coordinator?

1. Good communication/salesmanship skills.
2. Ability to be adaptable
3. Technical knowledge

Question 5: What skills do you see as needing the most improvement?

1. How to deal with difficult landowners.
2. Technical Training: How to design road structures (similar to structure in Lake Darling Watershed).
3. Sales and Marketing
4. LIDAR – once it is available statewide

**Training Requests:**

1. Ability to network with other project coordinators
2. Day training for new project coordinators
3. Set up mock training sessions – different people role play different roles. Have landowner on hand to answer questions.
4. Would like to have training in “Conservation Salesmanship” from a non-agency perspective.